EMBASSY
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

OFFICE OF CIVIL OPERATIONS

Headquarters, CORDS, III CTZ
17 July 1967

Dr. Dan Ellsberg
Rand Corporation
Santa Monica, California

Dear Dan:

I hope this finds you well on the road to recovery from both your hepatitis and the extreme physical exhaustion you must have encountered during the month of June. Noting that Germaine is back, I conclude that her common sense won out over her heart.

You will be interested to learn of the reaction of some of the MAC/V generals to your paper on Ky. General Tillson, CG, 25th Division, told me in a shocked whisper, "I burned that Ellsberg paper that you gave me. I would not permit any of my subordinates to read anything as horrible as that." General Tillson appeared puzzled when I asked him why he was afraid to let his subordinate officers read it. Fritz Freund cornered me a week after I gave him the paper and told me that it was the worst paper he had ever read but that it had certain value since it was the greatest compendium of half truths, lies and misinformation that had ever been assembled about Vietnam. Both of these remarks, incidentally, were made prior to the Thieu-Ky marriage.

I arranged about a month ago for a five-hour session between Ambassador Locke and Colonel Chau and this was followed up by a three-hour presentation to Ambassadors Bunker, Locke, General Weyand and myself at Locke's residence the next evening. Chau did a great job and there appeared to be a general consensus that the pacification effort should be primarily focused on the areas already considered secure.

Along this same line, I had a red letter day on the 10th of July when I had a 30-minute private conversation with McNamara, a 2-1/2 hour private conversation with Katzenbach and Undersecretary of the Army McGiffert as my house guest that evening and traveling with him all the next day. All three expressed agreement with the idea of focusing the pacification effort in the secure areas and of the necessity for more American leverage on the Vietnamese. McGiffert was particularly interested in the idea of inte-

grating or combining Vietnamese and US units. I am having a follow-up session with him after he completes the ten-day visit through the rest of the country.

About five weeks ago, I got a military aide assigned along with an H-23 helicopter (two-passenger bubble) and it has given me an opportunity to cover the countryside like never before. We park the helicopter at III Corps and the pilot lives across the street from me. I also have a helicopter pad next to my house. One of my first uses of the chopper was to drop in at six o'clock in the evening on the Montagnard village of Song Ha in northern Phuoc Long Province. I spent the night there with an interpreter and when I asked the village chief if there had ever been an American who spent the night there, he replied that there had never been an American who had visited there in the three and one half years of the village's existence. Part of this was reflected by the beguiling innocence of all the bare breasted young maidens who floated around the village without displaying any embarrassment (as they do in most other Montagnard hamlets).

The CORDS organization was finally approved exactly as I wanted it and I now command the total province advisory effort in the III CTZ and designated seven of the twelve provinces to be headed by a former OCO Representatives. Weyand remarked to Westmoreland that he didn't know whether he had taken over OCO or if OCO had taken him over.

I am on my way back from Nepal with Frenchy, my secretary, after a very brief 24-hour visit. Made the trip so as to talk with Ambassador Laise (Mrs. Bunker) and also to get 14 hours of dictation accomplished. By the time I get back, I will be much further ahead than had I remained in Saigon.

Lee paid your Cercle Sportif bill which, as I recall, consisted of two months dues. However, she has not given me the receipt yet. This will leave us about even financially or possibly with me owing you two or three dollars. If so, I will buy you lunch at a cheap place when I come through LA in the latter part of August or early September.

Incidentally, just recalled that I had about a 20-minute conversation with McNaughton (ISA) during the McNamara visit and he spoke very highly of you. He was surprised (or appeared to be) to learn that you had returned to the States and to Rand.

Picked up the Swedish "K" from Frank and find it convenient to have in the H-23. Dropped in at a Special Forces camp just south of the Cambodian border in Tay Ninh for the purpose of coordinating an effort on Ramsey,

and they offered me all kinds of goodies including a couple of CIDG wives if I would give them the Swedish "K." I reluctantly declined.

Frank Scotton left this week to return to Washington. Plans to contact you en route. He is not sure what he wants to do, but may come back here in September.

I expect to hear from you soon, to include the highlights of the bullfighting in Spain, the boating off the Riviera, and the
I continue to be overworked and Underfed with hardly any spare time to concentrate on the major objectives.

Best regards,

John P. Vann
Dep/CORDS

Secretary
missed & I
now forget.